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DCI REMARKS

TO

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EXECUTIVE SEMINAR

AT

CIA HEADQUARTERS

WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 1981

Congratulations to you on your bicentennial! Though it has been seven years since I left the Department, I have not forgotten that it was in 1781 that the Continental Congress established the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Nor have I forgotten that a year later, Secretary Livingston was given his intelligence mission. He was empowered to deal not only with diplomats, but also "with all other persons from whom he may expect to receive useful information relative to his department."

Over the years, Presidents have relied on the Foreign Service for political and economic reporting. But Presidents also used non-commissioned "executive agents" for secret missions. These agents were, in a sense, the forerunners of CIA collectors. They did not replace, but supplemented diplomatic collection.

Your reporting is still as important as ever. In many countries, it is sufficient. In others, your reporting narrows down what has to be gathered by secret methods.

We also depend on you for biographic reporting. And, let's not concentrate only in those in power now -- but also those on their way up. This reminds me of a true story about Ambassador Bunker and Mrs. Bunker. Years ago, in the American Embassy in Manila, there was stationed a

"Small Birds Attache" from the Department of the Interior. The Bunkers remembered this when stationed in India. On every occasion, Mrs. Bunker expounded what came to be known as the "small birds doctrine." She encouraged young Foreign Service couples to befriend and cultivate the "small birds" -- the ones on their way up the ladder of power and influence. Do likewise and preach the "small birds doctrine."

Now let's turn to the state of American intelligence today.

For some five years I was there at the creation of modern American intelligence. I was sending observers behind German lines in World War II. I was planning the organization of the first American peacetime intelligence service. Now, about a third of a century later I've spent three months looking over the American intelligence community that has evolved from that embryo. Now I'm talking about how it measures up to today's needs and how it might be improved.

My predecessors have changed intelligence to be more than a simple spy service. They developed a great center of scholarship and research. A center that has as many doctors and masters of every kind of art and science as any university campus.

Those previous Directors have produced a triumph of applied technology. That technical impact is felt from the depths of the oceans to the limits of outer space. They're using photography, electronics, acoustics and other technological marvels to learn things totally hidden on the other side of the world. In the SALT debate, for example, Americans openly discussed the details of Soviet missiles. Those missiles are

held most secret in the Soviet Union, but revealed to us by our intelligence systems.

All this has produced a staggering array of information, a veritable Niagara of facts. But facts can confuse. The wrong picture is not worth a thousand words. No photo, no electronic impulse can substitute for direct, on-the-scene knowledge of the key actors in a given country or region. No matter how spectacular a photo may be, that photo cannot reveal enough about plans, intentions, internal political dynamics, economics, and so forth. There are too many cases where photos are ambiguous or useless. Too many cases where electronic intelligence may drown the analyst in partial or conflicting information. Technical collection is of little help in the most difficult problem of all -- political intentions. Here clandestine human intelligence can make a difference.

We started a clandestine intelligence service in OSS. Over the years it has proven itself and has served the nation well. The clandestine service has also received undeserved slings and arrows. I am personally dedicated to supporting and strengthening that unique asset.

Of late, a good deal of the criticism of CIA has been leveled at the analytical function. The necessity of analysis is obvious. Collection is facts. Just as houses are made of stones, so is collection made of facts. But a pile of stones is not a house -- and a collection of facts is not necessarily intelligence.

Much of the criticism is based on unrealistic expectations of what

an intelligence service can do. We produce good current intelligence. We also produce good intelligence on military and economic capabilities. But if one reduces all intelligence analysis to the predictive function -- and then looks for a 1000 batting average -- no intelligence organization will measure up. We are interested in foreknowledge, but we do not have a pipeline to God. Nor do we have a crystal ball. In short, the CIA does not have powers of prophecy. The CIA has no crystal ball that can peer into the future with 20-20 sight. We are dealing with "probable" developments.

Also, it is one thing to deal with something that is knowable--but unknown by us. It is another thing to deal with something that is unknown--and unknowable. Often intelligence is expected to predict what course a country will take--when the leaders of that country themselves don't know what they will do next.

If we can't expect infallible prophecy from the nation's investment in intelligence, what can we expect? We can expect foresight. We can expect a careful definition of possibilities. We can expect professional analysis which probes and weighs probabilities and assesses their implications. We can expect analyses that assist policymakers in devising ways to prepare for and cope with the full range of probabilities. The President does not need a single best view, a guru, or a prophet. The nation needs the best analysis of the full range of views and data it can get.

The process of analysis and arriving at estimates needs to be made

as open and competitive as possible. We need to continue to resist the bureaucratic instinct for consensus.

We don't need analysts spending their time finding a middle ground or weasel words to conceal disagreement. The analyst's time needs to go into evaluating information, getting at its meaning and its implications -- expressing both their conclusions and their disagreements clearly.

A single homogenized estimate serves policymakers badly. The homogenized estimate buries valid and meaningful differences, forces the intelligence product to the lowest or blandest common denominator. This search for consensus cultivates the myth of infallibility. Consensus implicitly promises a reliability that cannot be delivered. Consensus too frequently deprives the intelligence product of relevance and the policymaker of a prudent range of possibilities.

The time has come to recognize that policymakers can easily sort through a wide range of opinions but cannot consider views and opinions they do not receive. The time has come to recognize that CIA, DIA, NSA, INR, and every other element of the intelligence community should not only be allowed to compete and surface differences, but be encouraged to do so.

And, the time has come to recognize that the intelligence community has no monopoly on truth, on insight, on initiative in foreseeing what will be relevant to policy. For that reason, we are in the process of reconstituting a President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. That Board would be made up of strong and experienced individuals with a wide range of relevant experience. In addition to that, we are asking

scientists and a wide variety of experts, scholars and practitioners to serve on advisory panels to address special problems. And we contract with think tanks and a wide variety of business corporations to do specialized research for us.

We will need to use even more of this specialized approach in the future to cope with the intelligence requirements of our increasingly complex and dangerous world. In the OSS, we were doing pretty well if we knew where the enemy was and how he was redeploying his forces. For the first twenty years of a peacetime intelligence service most of the effort went to understanding the production and characteristics of weapons. It is only in the last 10 years that it has dawned upon us: We have been threatened and damaged more by coups and subversion and economic aggression than by military force. We'll still devote a large slice of our effort to military estimates. We'll rely heavily on those estimates in formulating our defense budget and force structures. But we've got to supplement the military studies by increased efforts to assess economic vulnerabilities and technological breakthroughs. We've also got to identify social and political instabilities and how they can or are being targeted -- whether by economic and political means -- by subversion, propaganda, or terrorism.

There are great challenges ahead of us. We will rise to the occasion. There is an ancient Chinese saying: "May you live in interesting times." We do.